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ABSTRACT

The digest addresses concerns of parents of gifted children. An initial section recaps ways in which gifted children are identified. The next section examines ways in which parents can encourage gifted children at home (through such avenues as permitting ample time for thinking and daydreaming and assigning household tasks that coincide with interests). Additional questions are answered regarding underachievement, types of programs available in the schools, and the role of parent associations. Six national associations for the gifted are listed, as are resources related to parental concerns. Accompanying the digest is a minibibliography of 12 readings for parents and teachers of gifted students. (CL)

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1985
DIGEST

PARENTS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

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How Is a Gifted Child Identified?

Several sources of information should be used to identify gifted children, including reports from teachers, parental observations, pupil products, school achievement, standardized tests of intelligence and creativity, case studies, and other measures. A combination of criteria will provide educators and parents with a profile of the child that will include strengths and weaknesses, interests, and educational needs. It is important for parents to recognize that intelligence tests are just one of a number of tools that can be used to assess a child's intellectual and academic potential. Furthermore, there is, for good reason, no nationally defined gifted intelligence score. A local school system should use identification criteria that are appropriate for its population and that reflect the intent of the local gifted program.

My Children Have Been Identified As Gifted. What Can I Do at Home to Encourage Them?

1. It is important to provide a variety of stimuli and experiences geared to the children's natural interests. Books, toys, stories, puzzles, and games are obviously helpful, but you should also take care to provide materials and experiences that enrich imagery, challenge their abilities, and encourage the development of perceptual and motor skills.
2. Provide children with materials that do not demand a specific use. For example, give them paper and paints or crayons rather than coloring books. Give them building toys rather than preplanned kits.
3. Permit ample time for thinking and daydreaming. Do not fill their entire day with planned activities.
4. Be sure that children are given space of their own where they keep their own possessions, establish their own order, and work on their own projects.
5. Assign household tasks that coincide with interests.
6. Accept and use the tendency to see things differently.
7. Use the children's own interests as a guide and support them by using resources in the community and natural world. Museums, parks, libraries, theaters, art, music, and drama instruction all will enrich their lives. You will also encourage new interests by giving them as many enjoyable experiences as possible.
8. Gifted children learn from adults and older siblings by observation and questioning and without any intentional instruction. Recognizing traffic signs, counting, telling time, using a calendar, observing the stars and the planets, and learning about different kinds of trees and flowers are examples of such learning. Because they learn easily and eagerly, it is important to answer their questions, use the correct terminology, and show them how equipment is used.

My Children Are Gifted but They Seem Turned Off and Tuned Out. What is Going On?

Gifted children are children first and gifted second. Like all children, they need and respond to the love, caring, interest, and guidance of their parents. Sometimes, however, being gifted becomes a burden, especially if the children's environment does not meet their needs and expectations or if peers react negatively to their abilities. They may act out frustrations in the form of disruptive behavior, become insecure, or withdraw. It is not uncommon for gifted children to achieve at levels lower than their capabilities if they are not challenged. Dealing with these problems will require a cooperative effort between parents, school officials, and, in some cases, a professional counselor.

What About Programs in the Schools?

Many schools have programs for gifted children, but they are not always appropriate for every gifted child. Program administrators and teachers can help you decide. If no program for gifted students exists, you may want to help start one. In the meantime, you should consult with teachers and school administrators to see what can be done to meet your child's special needs within the regular class.

Is There an Association or Group I Can Join?

There is probably a state level association for parents of gifted children in your state. Address inquiries to your state education agency's consultant for the gifted. Organizations for parents of the gifted also work on the city, town, or regional level. To find out if your locality has such a group, contact local school system officials and teachers, particularly those who work with gifted programs. Other parent and civic organizations are also good sources of information about gifted associations. Membership in both local and state level organizations provides parents of the gifted

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with the support they need in order to help their own children and the opportunity to work together with others to improve the education of all gifted children. It is no coincidence that, nationwide, the strongest gifted educational programs have been developed where there are active and effective parent advocacy/support groups. If your locality has no association for parents of the gifted, you and other parents should consider forming such a group. Several of the resources listed in this digest can provide useful guidelines for this purpose, and often state organizations will provide direct assistance.

You may also want to join one of these national associations which welcome parents:

American Association for Gifted Children
15 Grammercy Park
New York, NY 10003
212/473-4266

American Mensa Limited
1701 W. 3rd Street 1-R
Brooklyn, NY 11223

Association for Gifted and Talented Students
1627 Frankfort Street
New Orleans, LA 70122

The Association for the Gifted, a Division of The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

National Association for Creative Children and Adults
8080 Springvalley Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45236 513/631-1777

National Association for Gifted Children
217 Gregory Drive
Hot Springs, AK 71901
213/767-6933

Dept. P 2070
County Rd. H
St. Paul, MN 555120

RESOURCES

American Association for Gifted Children. (1981). *The gifted child, the family, and the community*. New York: Walker and Co.

American Association for Gifted Children. (1978) *On being gifted*. New York: Walker and Co. Both of the above books are available from the American Association for Gifted Children, 15 Gramercy Park, New York, NY 10003.

Barbe, W.B., & Renzulli, J.S. (Eds.). (1981). *Psychology and education of the gifted* 3rd ed. New York: Irvington Publishers.

Colangelo, N., & Zaffran, R.T. (Eds.). (1979). *New voices in counseling the gifted*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

Delp, J., & Martinson, R. (1977). *The gifted and talented: A handbook for parents*. Ventura, CA: National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented. For current price list for this handbook and other useful publications write: N/S-LTI-G/T, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools, 535 East Main St., Ventura, CA 93009.

Gallagher, J.J. (1975). *Teaching the gifted child*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gallagher, J.J., Kaplan, S.N., & Sato, I.S. (1983). Promoting the education of the gifted/talented: Strategies for advocacy. Ventura, CA: National/State Leadership Training Institute on the Gifted and Talented.

Gallagher, J.J. & Weiss, P. (1979). *The education of gifted and talented students: A history and perspective*. Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education. To order send $1 to the Council at 725 15th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

Ginsberg, G. (1976). *Is your child gifted?* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ginsberg, G., & Harrison, C.H. (1977). *How to help your gifted child: A handbook for parents and teachers*. New York: Monarch Press.

Gregg, E., & Knotts, J. (1980). *Growing wisdom, growing wonder: Helping your child to learn from birth through five years*. New York: Macmillan.

Kanigher, H. (1977) Everyday enrichment for gifted children at home and school. Ventura, CA: National/State Leadership Training Institute.

Karnes, M.B. (Ed.). (1983). *The underserved: Our young gifted children*. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children. For current price list for this book and other useful publications, write: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091.

Kaufmann, F. (1977). *Your gifted child and you*. Reston, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Martinson, R. (1975). *The identification of the gifted and talented*. Ventura, CA: National/State Leadership Training Institute.

Mitchell, P.B. (Ed.). (1981). *An advocate's guide to building support for gifted and talented education*. Washington, DC: National Association of State Boards of Education. To order this book, send $7.50 to the National Association of State Boards of Education, 444 North Capitol St., N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

Passow, A.H. (Ed.). (1979). *The gifted and talented: Their education and development*. Chicago: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Vail, P. (1979). *The world of the gifted child*. New York: Walker and Co. Also available in Penguin paperback.

Webb, J.T., Meckstroth, E.A., & Tolan, S. (1982). *Guiding the gifted child: A practical source for parents and teachers*. Columbus, OH: Ohio Psychology Publ. Co.

Witty, P.A. (Ed.). (1971). *Reading for the gifted and creative student*. Newark, NJ: International Reading Association.

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A MINIBIBLIOGRAPHY ON READINGS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Digests on the Gifted, 1985

A collection of 24 two-page reproducible fact sheets about educating gifted and talented students. These newly developed or revised resources provide the perfect handout for meetings with parents, teachers, and the community at large.

Available from:
The Council for Exceptional Children
Publication Sales
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
$6.90

Does This Mean My Kid's a Genius? by Linda Perigo Moore. 1981. 193 pp.

Intended for parents of gifted children, the book offers advice ranging from identifying a child with unusual capabilities to beginning education at home.

Available from:
McGraw-Hill Book Co.
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
$11.95

The Gifted Child, the Family and the Community edited by Bernard S. Miller and Merle Price. 1981. 246 pp.

Thirty-three author-contributed papers focus on ways in which the family, school, and the community can help gifted students develop.

Available from:
Walker and Co.
720 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10019
$17.50

Gifted Children: Psychological and Educational Perspectives by Abraham J. Tannenbaum. 1983. 527 pp.

The text is intended to synthesize theory and research in the field of gifted education.

Available from:
MacMillan Publishing Co.
866 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022
$22.95

Mental Gymnastics: A Source Book of Over 500 Activities for Stimulating Creative Thinking in the Classroom by Jean M. Shaw and Mary Jo Puckett Chatt. 1984. 259 pp.

The book is intended to help teachers incorporate divergent thinking in the classroom with elementary and junior high gifted and nongifted students.

Available from:
Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632
$14.95

The Most-Asked Questions about Gifted Children: Answers for Parents and Educators by Carl C. Fehrle and others. 1982. 36 pp.

Intended for both parents and educators, the booklet offers answers to the questions parents ask about their gifted children.

Available from:
ERIC Document Reproduction Service
3900 Wheeler Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22304
Order No. ED 223 047

Parenting the Gifted: Developing the Promise by Sheila C. Perino and Joseph Perino. 1981. 214 pp.

The book is designed to help parents become participants in the identification, education, and development of their gifted children.

Available from:
R.R. Bowker Co.
1180 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
$19.95 hard copy, $10.95 paperback

Parenting Your Gifted Child, number 4 of a Series by Trevor T. Steinbach. 1983. 11 pp.

This handbook is designed to help parents understand, encourage, and help their gifted children.

Available from:
ERIC Document Reproduction Service
3900 Wheeler Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22304
Order No. ED 240 809

A Parent's Guide to the Education of Preschool Gifted Children edited by Roberta M. Felker, 1982. 87 pp.

The booklet presents information to help parents raise their gifted and/or creative preschool children.

Available from:
ERIC Document Reproduction Service
3900 Wheeler Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22304
Order No. ED 233 529

Raising Your Gifted Child by John V. Flowers and others, 1982. 124 pp.

Types of giftedness, the education of the gifted child, the underachieving gifted child, creativity, and mental health concerns are addressed, and a guide to resources is provided.

Available from:
Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632
$11.95 hardcopy, $5.95 paperback

The Underserved: Our Young Gifted Children edited by Merle B. Karnes, 1983. 238 pp.

Nine author-contributed papers focus on the needs of preschool gifted and talented children including topics such as characteristics, identification, curriculum, family role, and teacher training.

Available from:
The Council for Exceptional Children
Publication Sales
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
$15.00

Your Gifted Child and You by Felice Kaufmann, 1976. 56 pp.

Intended for parents and teachers of gifted and talented children, the book discusses identification criteria and educational strategies for developing their potential.

Available from:
The Council for Exceptional Children
Publications Sales
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091
$5.50

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